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United Nations Programme of Assistance in the Teaching, Study, Dissemination and Wider Appreciation of International Law

Report of the Sixth Committee

Rapporteur: Mr. Isaias **Medina** (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela)

I. Introduction

1. The item entitled "United Nations Programme of Assistance in the Teaching, Study, Dissemination and Wider Appreciation of International Law" was included in the provisional agenda of the seventy-first session of the General Assembly pursuant to Assembly resolution 70/116 of 14 December 2015.

2. At its 2nd plenary meeting, on 16 September 2016, the General Assembly, on the recommendation of the General Committee, decided to include the item in its agenda and to allocate it to the Sixth Committee.

3. The Sixth Committee considered the item at its 17th, 18th, 30th and 32nd meetings, on 17 and 20 October and on 3 and 7 November 2016. The views of the representatives who spoke during the Committee's consideration of the item are reflected in the relevant summary records.[1]

4. For its consideration of the item, the Committee had before it the following documents:

(a) Report of the Secretary-General (A/71/432);

(b) Letter dated 29 September 2016 from the Permanent Representative of Thailand to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (A/71/422).

[1] A/C.6/71/SR.17, A/C.6/71/SR.18, A/C.6/71/SR.30 and A/C.6/71/SR.32.

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II. Consideration of draft resolution A/C.6/71/L.17

5. At the 30th meeting, on 3 November, the representative of Ghana, on behalf of the Bureau, introduced a draft resolution entitled "United Nations Programme of Assistance in the Teaching, Study, Dissemination and Wider Appreciation of International Law" (A/C.6/71/L.17).

6. At its 32nd meeting, on 7 November, the Committee adopted draft resolution A/C.6/71/L.17, without a vote (see para. 7).

III. Recommendation of the Sixth Committee

7. The Sixth Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of the following draft resolution:

United Nations Programme of Assistance in the Teaching, Study, Dissemination and Wider Appreciation of International Law

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolution 2099 (XX) of 20 December 1965, in which the General Assembly established the United Nations Programme of Assistance in the Teaching, Study, Dissemination and Wider Appreciation of International Law to contribute towards a better knowledge of international law as a means of strengthening international peace and security and promoting friendly relations and cooperation among States,

Noting that 2016 marks the beginning of the second half-century of the Programme of Assistance, and emphasizing the importance of ensuring the successful continuation of the Programme for the benefit of present and future generations of lawyers,

Reaffirming that the Programme of Assistance is a core activity of the United Nations and that it has provided the foundation for the efforts of the United Nations to promote a better knowledge of international law for more than half a century,

Recognizing the major contribution of the Programme of Assistance to the teaching and dissemination of international law for the benefit of lawyers in all countries, legal systems and regions of the world for more than half a century,

Emphasizing the important contribution of the Programme of Assistance, in particular the United Nations Regional Courses in International Law and the United Nations Audiovisual Library of International Law, to the furtherance of United Nations rule of law programmes and activities,

Reaffirming that the increasing demand for international law training and dissemination activities creates new challenges for the Programme of Assistance,

Recognizing the importance of the Programme of Assistance effectively reaching its beneficiaries, including with regard to languages, while bearing in mind limitations on available resources,

Taking note with appreciation of the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the Programme of Assistance[1] and the views of the Advisory Committee on the United Nations Programme of Assistance in the Teaching, Study, Dissemination and Wider Appreciation of International Law, which are contained in the report,

Noting with satisfaction that resources have been provided under the programme budget for the organization of the United Nations Regional Courses in

[1] A/71/432.

International Law on an annual basis and the further development of the United Nations Audiovisual Library of International Law,

Welcoming the organization, for the first time in the history of the Programme of Assistance, of all three of the United Nations Regional Courses in International Law for Africa, for Asia-Pacific and for Latin America and the Caribbean in 2016,

Noting with regret that the Hamilton Shirley Amerasinghe Memorial Fellowship on the Law of the Sea was not awarded in 2016 owing to insufficient voluntary contributions,

Considering that international law should occupy an appropriate place in the teaching of legal disciplines at all universities,

Convinced that States, international and regional organizations, universities and institutions should be encouraged to give further support to the Programme of Assistance and to increase their activities to promote the teaching, study, dissemination and wider appreciation of international law, in particular those activities which are of special benefit to persons from developing countries,

Reaffirming that in the conduct of the Programme of Assistance it would be desirable to use as far as possible the resources and facilities made available by Member States, international and regional organizations, universities, institutions and others,

Reaffirming also the hope that, in appointing highly qualified lecturers for the seminars to be held within the framework of the fellowship programmes in international law, account would be taken of the need to secure the representation of major legal systems and balance among various geographical regions,

1. *Reiterates its approval* of the guidelines and recommendations contained in section III of the previous report of the Secretary-General,[2] in particular those designed to strengthen and revitalize the United Nations Programme of Assistance in the Teaching, Study, Dissemination and Wider Appreciation of International Law in response to the increasing demand for international law training and dissemination activities;

2. *Authorizes* the Secretary-General to carry out the activities specified in his reports[3] in 2017, including the following activities to be financed from provisions in the regular budget:

(a) The International Law Fellowship Programme, with a minimum of 20 fellowships;

(b) The United Nations Regional Courses in International Law for Africa, for Asia-Pacific and for Latin America and the Caribbean, with a minimum of 20 fellowships for each course;

(c) The United Nations Audiovisual Library of International Law, including its continuation and further development;

[2] A/70/423.

[3] A/70/423 and A/71/432.

(d) The dissemination of legal publications and lectures of the Audiovisual Library to developing countries to the extent that there are sufficient resources;

3. *Also authorizes* the Secretary-General to further expand the activities referred to in paragraph 2 above, to be financed from voluntary contributions received pursuant to paragraphs 14, 24 and 25 below;

4. *Commends* the Codification Division of the Office of Legal Affairs of the Secretariat for the cost-saving measures undertaken with regard to the International Law Fellowship Programme and the United Nations Regional Courses in International Law to increase the number of fellowships for the training courses financed from provisions in the regular budget, taking into account the number of applications for these courses;

5. *Authorizes* the Secretary-General to award additional fellowships for the training courses from available resources under the programme budget for the Programme of Assistance and from voluntary contributions received pursuant to paragraph 25 below;

6. *Requests* the Secretary-General to consider admitting, for participation in the training courses, self-funded candidates present in the host country or from countries willing to bear the entire cost of their participation;

7. *Authorizes* the Secretary-General to award a minimum of one scholarship in 2017 under the Hamilton Shirley Amerasinghe Memorial Fellowship on the Law of the Sea, taking note of paragraph 8 of resolution 69/117 of 10 December 2014 and paragraph 4 of resolution 70/116 of 14 December 2015;

8. *Requests* the Secretary-General to continue to include resources under the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2018-2019 for the International Law Fellowship Programme, the United Nations Regional Courses in International Law for Africa, for Asia-Pacific and for Latin America and the Caribbean each year and for the continuation and further development of the United Nations Audiovisual Library of International Law;

9. *Expresses its appreciation* to the Secretary-General for the activities conducted under the Programme of Assistance and, in particular, for the efforts to strengthen, expand and enhance the international law training and dissemination activities within the framework of the Programme in 2016;

10. *Commends* the Secretary-General for the continuation and further development of the United Nations Audiovisual Library of International Law as a major contribution to the teaching and dissemination of international law around the world;

11. *Recognizes* the importance of the United Nations legal publications prepared by the Office of Legal Affairs, and once again requests the Secretary-General to issue the publications referred to in his previous report[4] in various formats, including hard copy publications, which are essential for developing countries;

[4] A/70/423, para. 45.

12. *Reiterates its appreciation* for the efforts that were undertaken by the Office of Legal Affairs to bring up to date the United Nations legal publications, in particular the desktop publishing initiative undertaken by the Codification Division from 2003 to 2013, which greatly enhanced the timely issuance of its legal publications and made possible the preparation of legal training materials, as noted in its resolutions 64/113 of 16 December 2009, 65/25 of 6 December 2010, 66/97 of 9 December 2011, 67/91 of 14 December 2012, 68/110 of 16 December 2013, 69/117 and 70/116;

13. *Expresses its regret once again* that none of the publications referred to in the report of the Secretary-General have been issued since 2014, when desktop publishing was discontinued owing to lack of resources, notwithstanding its resolutions 68/110, 69/117 and 70/116, and reiterates its recommendation that the necessary resources be made available to resume this successful initiative;

14. *Expresses its appreciation* for the preparation of the International Law Handbook as a valuable resource for international law education on a broad range of core subjects of international law in its training courses and for academic institutions in developing countries to promote international law education in those countries, and requests Member States to provide the voluntary contributions necessary to ensure the completion of this educational resource in English and French, as well as its dissemination in developing countries;

15. *Requests* the Office of Legal Affairs to continue to maintain and expand its websites listed in the annex to the report of the Secretary-General as an invaluable tool for the dissemination of international law materials as well as for advanced legal research;

16. *Requests* that interns and research assistants be enlisted for the preparation of materials for the United Nations Audiovisual Library of International Law as well as the International Law Handbook;

17. *Welcomes* the efforts of the Codification Division to revitalize and conduct the United Nations Regional Courses in International Law as an important training activity;

18. *Expresses its appreciation* to Ethiopia, Thailand and Uruguay for hosting the United Nations Regional Courses in International Law for Africa, for Asia-Pacific and for Latin America and the Caribbean in 2016, and also expresses its appreciation to Chile for its willingness to host the Regional Course for Latin America and the Caribbean in 2017;

19. *Expresses its appreciation* to the African Union for the valuable contribution it continues to make to the United Nations Regional Course in International Law for Africa;

20. *Expresses its appreciation* to Ghana for hosting the first International Law Seminar for African Universities in 2016 to promote capacity-building in international law education for African universities and to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the Programme of Assistance, and to Ethiopia for its willingness to host the second International Law Seminar for African Universities in 2017;

21. *Once again encourages* the Codification Division to cooperate with the African Institute of International Law, dedicated to offering higher learning and research in international law needed for the development of Africa, in the implementation of the relevant activities under the Programme of Assistance;

22. *Expresses its appreciation* to the Hague Academy of International Law for the valuable contribution it continues to make to the Programme of Assistance, which has enabled candidates under the International Law Fellowship Programme to attend and participate in the Fellowship Programme in conjunction with courses at the Academy;

23. *Notes with appreciation* the contributions of the Hague Academy to the teaching, study, dissemination and wider appreciation of international law, and calls upon Member States and interested organizations to give favourable consideration to the appeal of the Academy for a continuation of support and a possible increase in their financial contributions, to enable the Academy to carry out its activities, particularly those relating to the summer courses, regional courses and programmes of the Centre for Studies and Research in International Law and International Relations;

24. *Requests* the Secretary-General to continue to publicize the Programme of Assistance and periodically to invite Member States, universities, philanthropic foundations and other interested national and international institutions and organizations, as well as individuals, to make voluntary contributions towards the financing of the Programme or otherwise to assist in its implementation and possible expansion;

25. *Reiterates its request* to Member States and interested organizations, institutions and individuals to make voluntary contributions for the United Nations Audiovisual Library of International Law and for the United Nations Regional Courses in International Law organized by the Codification Division as an important complement to the International Law Fellowship Programme;

26. *Expresses its appreciation* to those Member States that have made voluntary contributions to support the Programme of Assistance;

27. *Requests* the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly at its seventy-second session on the implementation of the Programme of Assistance in 2017 and, following consultations with the Advisory Committee on the Programme of Assistance, to submit recommendations regarding the Programme in subsequent years;

28. *Decides* to include in the provisional agenda of its seventy-second session the item entitled "United Nations Programme of Assistance in the Teaching, Study, Dissemination and Wider Appreciation of International Law".